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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION IN RUSSIA DURING THE WAR<sup>1</sup>

By ROBERT P. BLAKE

PETROGRAD

THE most marked feature in the development of public opinion in Russia since the beginning of the war is the appearance, after an initial period of accord with the government, of a steady and growing dissatisfaction with the ruling circles and their ways. This has culminated not in a revolutionary movement, as one might anticipate, but in an endeavor, by means of the mobilization of the physical and moral resources of the country, to carry the war through to a victorious conclusion.

The organization and unification of Russian society under the pressure exerted by the war has not been as immediate nor as complete as was the case with the other European countries. Towards bringing this about a number of factors have contributed. In the first place, the constitutional structure of the empire, being autocratic in its nature, is opposed, both in principle and in practise, to any movement which is based upon popular initiative. No society of any sort can be formed in Russia without preliminarily submitting its by-laws to the police authorities. Next, the profoundly individualistic nature and non-homogeneous character of Russian society itself has proved a great hindrance to united work. The weak spot has lain not in the work of individuals or of groups, but in the coordination of the work of these groups into a larger whole. It is just in this last point where the greatest progress has been made since the beginning of the war. It forms the latest important development in the social history of the empire. Lastly, but not least, nationalistic troubles have come to check the development of internal unity within the empire. The Jewish question has proved practically disruptive in this regard.

To understand properly the course of affairs in Russia during the war, it is essential to run back to a point some three or four months anterior to the commencement of hostilities, so as to gather up the threads of the later developments.

On the twelfth of February, 1914, Count V. K. Kokóvtsov

<sup>1</sup> Written in the Spring of 1916. We hope to publish an article tracing the later development in Russia, leading to the revolution.

resigned the post of prime minister, and was succeeded by I. L. Góremýkin. The change of ministers gave the signal for the beginning of a vigorous reactionary policy on the part of the government, which found its expression in the following lines of action. In the first place, the administration consistently attempted to place a check upon the power of the Duma as a whole, and upon the rights of the members as individuals. Secondly, the press of the laboring party and the leaders of the trade-unions were made the object of a systematic and sharp persecution. Practically all the workmen's newspapers in Petersburg had been driven out of business before the war began by a system of fines, confiscations, and suits brought against the editors.

The conflict between the ministry and the Duma became very acute. Even such a conservative and nationalistic paper as the *Kievlyánin* (March 19, 1914) declared: "We are living upon a volcano." The social democrats and the laboring deputies tried to obstruct the discussion of the budget in the Duma (May 5, 1914), which led to their being excluded from the chamber for the remainder of that, and for the sessions immediately following. The general dissatisfaction thus aroused led to the rejection of the budget by a small majority (148-159; 143-147). This produced a profound impression throughout the country at large. The uneasy feelings thus induced were fostered and sustained by the fermentation which took place within the laboring classes. Strikes began in all the more important commercial centers in Russia. The exasperation of the workmen was envenomed by the merciless persecution which was carried on against their leaders and their press by the government.

Economic questions played a certain part in the outbreak of the strikes, but their political coloring is unmistakable. The leaders of the social democrats in St. Petersburg officially denied their connection with the disorders, and this is probably correct. The workmen themselves, however, admitted the political significance of their actions, and this is proven by the fact that the most serious disorders (St. Petersburg, May 23, 1914), when barricades were erected in the streets, were coincident with the visit of President Poincaré. In view of the later developments, the suspicion of German machinations was and is very widely spread in Russia, but there is no definite proof to settle the question.

In the meantime, however, black clouds had begun to loom on the European horizon. The bloody tragedy of Sarajevo was whole-heartedly condemned by all sections of Russian

society, but the natural sympathy of the country for the Serbians, combined with the evident intention of Austria to make a *casus belli* out of the affair, speedily caused the press and public opinion to swing around. The nationalistic sheets at once began a vigorous agitation in favor of the Serbs; the liberal papers were more reserved.

The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia brought the full seriousness of the situation home to every one, although personal observations firmly convinced me that the mass of the population even then did not believe that it would come to an open break. In official circles the impending danger was recognized upon the receipt of the news that Austria intended to hand in an ultimatum to Serbia. On that same day all furloughs were cancelled; officers were warned to be ready for active service. An official communiqué in the "Russian Invalid" gave notice that the government was most seriously concerned over the situation, while the tone of the nationalist press grew more and more warlike.

The excitement which prevailed in St. Petersburg from the twenty-ninth of July to the first of August, 1914, inclusive, passes all description. Every few moments a new extra appeared on the street; the newsboys were stormed by an excited crowd, and the sheets of paper, still damp from the press, melted like snow before the blast of a furnace. Rumors swept through the city like prairie-fires; nothing was too unlikely to find credence.

The handing in of the German ultimatum to Russia changed the internal situation in the Empire as if by the stroke of a magician's wand. The strikes among the working men ceased with Austria's declaration of war against Serbia, entirely apart from police measures. From the first of August onward all the cities of the Russian dominions were the seats of gigantic patriotic demonstrations: young and old, rich and poor, men, women and children united in expressing their loyalty by word and deed.

The best proof of the latter was afforded by the speed and smoothness with which the mobilization was carried out. In the "historic" session of the Duma (August 7, 1914) only the social democrats, true to their principles, came forward with a protest against the war. All the other groups made declarations testifying to their patriotic feelings.

The only discord in the universal concert, besides the *démarche* of the socialist party, was the somewhat dubious position which was assumed by the *Ryetch*, which is the semi-

official organ of the Cadets (C(onstitutional) D(emocrats)). This took the form of a—to say the least—cool attitude towards Serbia, and an exceedingly restrained—even disapproving—tone in commenting on the policy pursued by the government. This led to a furious polemic between the *Nóvoye Vrémya* and the *Ryetch*, and in the end to the closing of the *Ryetch* for some days. I have full reason to affirm that this was not the attitude of the remainder of the cadet press nor of the party in general, but arose primarily from the sympathy towards the Bulgarians which Milyukóv has always entertained. For this he was subsequently taken to task in his party's caucus, and he there admitted his error. The rooted distrust of the government and its ways which the progressives in general felt presumably played a part here as well.

The readers will easily comprehend the significance and the extent of the alteration in the political situation. This, of course, was not merely a product of the enthusiasm of the moment; other deep-lying causes were at work as well. In order to grasp this fully, we must bear in mind what the previous attitude of the Russian had been towards the German. It was profoundly different from the one which he adopted with regard to other foreigners. It is necessary to make a sharp distinction here between the upper and lower sections of the population. For the peasant the word *Nyémets* (German) had for two centuries been synonymous with that of oppressor, either in the shape of a government official, or of a stern and unsympathetic factory superintendent; either as an overseer of a landlord's estate, or as a rich farmer, who kept himself strictly apart from the surrounding Russian villages, the population of which looked upon him with mingled envy and hatred. All his disgust and dislike the peasant sums up in the depreciative “Nyemtchurá.” He terms all foreigners “Nyémtsy,” as they are the specimens of the breed whom he sees most often.

With the educated classes the situation had shaped itself somewhat differently. In the forties, fifties and sixties of the last century, the tie between intellectual Russia and intellectual Germany was very close and firm. This stage of the development Turgéniev has immortalized in the figure of Bazárov in his “Fathers and Sons.” After the foundation of the German Empire and the accompanying rise of militarism, we find a change in the order of things. While individuals continued to remain in close touch with Germany and with German thought, intellectual Russia as a whole ceased to feel a close sympathy with Germany. This trend was fostered by the attitude which

was taken by the Germans in the Baltic Provinces, whose inclinations have ever been exceedingly conservative and monarchistic. In the second place, the unmistakable connection between the reactionary movement under Alexander III. and influences proceeding from Berlin caused the sentiments of the intelligent class to cool still further.

Thus we can maintain without exaggeration that neither in intelligent circles nor in the body of the population was there ever the same sense of intimacy or the same fraternizing with the Germans which there has been, for example, with France since 1890. To what extent the government sympathized with Germanophile tendencies it is very difficult to say. A number of actions on the part of certain ministers—notably Maklakóv, the minister of the interior—can only be interpreted in this way. Such are, for example, the extraordinary lenience shown towards the richer German and Austrian subjects who remained in the two capitals, the delay and uncertainty attendant on their being sent off into the eastern governments, the slowness and the evident reluctance of the government to take steps to liquidate the affairs of the German colonists in the southwest provinces, and so on. It is a question here, however, whether it was a matter of personal belief, or whether the German party at the court was not behind it. The latter has been and is notoriously strong; the feeling of resentment both among the educated classes and among the mass of the population is correspondingly fierce and bitter.

Intimately connected with the above question are two others, which have vexed Russian politics unceasingly for the last generation, and which have by no means lost their acuteness at the present time. These are the Polish and the Jewish problems. A line or two about them will not be out of place here: we shall return to them again below.

The words of the Grand Duke's manifesto which promised a new era to the Poles were in general accepted with satisfaction by Russian society. The injustice, mismanagement and oppression on a petty and on a grand scale, which have marked the history of Russian government in Poland, were no secret, but the war seemed to give an opportunity to turn over a new leaf. Officialdom, however, and especially the minister of justice, Shcheglovítov, displayed an attitude toward the question which was more than cool.

The Jewish problem, that festering sore of Russian politics, did not fail to raise its hydra head. The subsidized press, in spite of the general demand from all quarters to cease quar-

relling and get together, continued its attacks and provocative articles against the Jews. Public opinion as yet had scarcely cooled down after the Biélis trial, and the course of events soon gave the anti-Semites new and promising material to exploit.

Such, in brief, is the outline of the situation as it was at the beginning of the war. The government had an unequalled opportunity to solidly unite with itself the overpowering mass of Russian society. Had it chosen to come half way and meet the demands of public opinion, it would easily have made its position impregnable. This, however, was not done. For this failure, in my estimation, two factors were primarily responsible. The first of these was the Russian bureaucrat's rooted fear and suspicion of aught that smacks of popular initiative. The second was the personal character of some of the ministers. I have in view here in particular the head of the cabinet, Goremýkin, and to a lesser extent the ministers of the interior and of justice, Maklakov and Shcheglovítov. People are not agreed in their ideas of the relative rôles which these men played. Public opinion in general is inclined to make Maklakov the person to blame for the country's losing faith in the ministry. Progressive political circles, however, affirm that Goremýkin really pulled the strings, Maklakov being merely a tool in his hands. In my estimation, this view is nearer the truth. Goremýkin, while not a man of real ability, was a clever politician, and got others to pull his chestnuts out of the fire for him. Maklakov and Shcheglovítov were typical bureaucrats of the narrow type, who knew very well how to utilize the administrative machinery in order to put obstacles in the way of public opinion, but distinguished themselves in no other way.

The development of public opinion since that time has followed two lines. There has been a steady and progressive disappointment in the government and in its actions—not merely regarding the measures which it has undertaken, but likewise on account of those which it has not. The dissatisfaction evoked by this disappointment has found an expression not alone in polemical attacks, and (in some cases) violence on the part of the populace, but (what is more important) in a strong and growing movement towards the mobilization of the strength and resources of the country to aid in the prosecution of the war. This movement owes its origin to the activities of various national organizations. While its development has been under the eye of the government, and the circumstances of war time have compelled the latter to avail itself of the aid of popular initiative, the attitude maintained towards the associations by

the officials has been exceedingly cool. Not seldom have the national societies been forced to overcome the opposition, secret or open, of the ruling authorities.

In spite of the fact that all sections of the populations had solemnly declared that all internal conflicts should be dropped, the subsidized conservative press (*Zémshchina*, *Gólos Rúsi* and their ilk) continued its attacks upon the Jews. The cases of spying where the latter were concerned gave them only too good an opportunity to keep the popular mind irritated. The exceedingly reserved and suspicious attitude of the Jews in Galicia towards the Russian troops did not help matters. The anti-Jewish agitation at this juncture was in itself, perhaps, not such a serious matter, but the close connection between the Polish and Jewish questions gave thinking people cause for serious concern. The Russian press was deprived through the censorship of the possibility of discussing the question of Polish autonomy, while the doings of the local authorities contributed considerably towards dampening the enthusiasm among the Polish population. The manifesto of the Grand Duke gave promise of freedom to the oppressed peoples of Austria-Hungary, and this was formally confirmed by the Viceroy of Galicia, Count A. A. Bóbrinskii. The facts, however, showed the matter up in a different light. The "dregs of Russian officialdom" were sent down to rule Galicia. The nationalist leaders, headed by the active, energetic, but tactless archbishop of Volhýnia, Evlógií, started an active persecution against the Unionist Church in Galicia, in spite of the direct instructions of the viceroy. The metropolitan of the Unionist Church, Count Szeptícki and a number of Ruthenian nationalists were exiled to Eastern Russia.

Along with these nationalistic troubles, the discontent with the government's attitude and actions was given other material to feed itself upon. The governors systematically thwarted the attempts of the population to organize: the swift adjournment of the Duma made liberal circles uneasy. The original intention of the administration had been to prorogue the meeting of the legislative chambers until 1915, but the earnest representations of the deputies caused Góremýkin to reduce this period by half. The renewal of the session was fixed for November, 1914.

Russian society had been disturbed for some time by rumors of a memorandum to the government, in which a number of conservative leaders demanded a speedy conclusion of peace in view of the danger of a revolutionary outbreak. These reports induced the Moscow City Duma to dispatch a telegram to the

Emperor, requesting reassurance on this point. In response to this, a reassuring answer was received. In the meantime, however, the government issued a proclamation in which the blame for the above-mentioned stories was laid at the door of the social democrats. Shortly afterwards the news was published that the police had arrested eleven members of that party in a house upon the Výborg Chaussée near Petrograd. Among them were five of the deputies of the Duma. The trial of the case came off February 23–26, 1915. Although it was proven in court that the members had not adopted the resolution which had been sent from abroad regarding the desirability of the defeat of the government, and had resolved to defer the beginning of any agitation until after the war, none the less all concerned, including the five deputies, were sent into exile. This decision, while properly grounded and motivated from a legal point of view, deeply embittered many people. This feeling was intensified by the sentence which was passed upon the well-known emigrant, V. L. Búrtsev, at about the same time. The latter had returned to Russia to serve his country, and had been arrested at the frontier. He was brought to trial on the old political charges against him, and likewise exiled. Shortly afterwards the Russian Economic Society was closed. It is the oldest learned society in the country, with the exception of the Academy of Sciences, with a century and a half of honorable career behind it. Later on the minister of the interior, A. N. Chvostóv, admitted that the reason was that the Society "had become a center of public movement."

The facts mentioned above induced in the Duma at its re-opening (January, 1915) a feeling radically different from that prevailing during the August session. In place of the enthusiasm which had then exalted the members, the deputies had now become intensely conscious of the real seriousness of the situation. The extreme difficulties with which the army was already contending in regard to ammunition supplies were beginning to become known. The members who had just returned from the front pictured the situation in the darkest colors, and showed how things really stood. General Suchomlínov affirmed that "everything was going all right," which declaration was later on branded as a "deception of the Imperial Duma" (Milyukóv's speech, August 1, 1915). At about the same time rumors of the shortage of ammunition began to circulate among the population.

A second matter which gave serious alarm to public opinion was the rapid rise in prices, which was particularly swift

during the months of November and December, 1914. The enormous extent of the Russian Empire, with its relatively scanty population, and weakly developed railroad system, makes it very difficult to meet and overcome by means of timely hauling any economic shortage. In addition to this, two of the main trunk lines which lead to Petrograd were almost wholly monopolized by the military authorities. The traffic organization of the Russian railroads had never been what it should be, and now, under the stress of war conditions, it became thoroughly disorganized.

A rise in prices on imported goods was of course inevitable, and was received more or less philosophically by the public at large. The steady rise in prices on food-products, however, touched each separate individual in the population in his most tender spot. This was the more acute in Petrograd, as the immediate territorial surroundings of the city are very poor in an agricultural way; meat and butter, for example, are brought almost exclusively from the Don Basin and from the Baltic provinces, respectively. The storekeepers naturally took advantage of the situation, and began to force up prices, while the approach of cold weather, combined with the scanty supply of wood on hand, caused all to view the coming winter with alarm.

After the January session of the Duma the public organizations began to bestir themselves in earnest, but it was the retreat of the Russian armies from Galicia and from Poland, beginning in the end of April, 1915, which gave a new and mighty impetus to this movement. Under pressure of misfortunes on the field of battle, the discovery of the Myasoyédov conspiracy, and the lack of ammunition, a state of mind fraught with grave consequences began to pervade the country. The government decided (rumor has it that General Yanushkiévitch, the former chief of staff, was the author of the measure), in view of the many instances of espionage which had been proved against the Jews, to expel the entire Jewish population from the territory immediately contiguous to the field of military activity. At the same time the "Black Band" papers continued and increased their *pogrom* agitation, scattering broadcast accusations of treachery against the whole race. Simultaneously with this a vigorous campaign was carried on against the Germans in the Baltic provinces, in which very questionable elements assumed the lead. The agitation had been begun by the *Nóvoya Vrémya* and some of the other papers. At first numbers of prominent men took part in the "society for the conflict with German oppression," but, in view of the dubious

character of the leading spirits in the enterprise, they speedily dropped out.

Overstrained nerves gave way in the outburst at Moscow (June 8-10, 1915). The true history of this affair has not yet been written, and perhaps never will be. Various versions are current as to the cause of it, but it is clear that no one factor is to blame for all the trouble. Many were evidently at work. What actually happened was the plundering and wrecking of six hundred and ninety-two business places and factories. One hundred and thirteen concerns belonging to German and Austrian subjects were destroyed, while five hundred and seventy-nine stores of Russian, English and French firms suffered. The police took no steps whatever to stop the plundering, but stood calmly by and watched. The mob turned its attention at first to those stores which belonged to subjects of the hostile powers, but later pillaged whatever came their way. On the third day the intervention of the troops put a stop to the affair.

The above-mentioned circumstances brought about a strong feeling of discontent with the government on the part of the population. What is more important, however, it likewise aroused a determination in the more vigorous circles of society to better the situation. The instruments which served for the furtherance of this project were those general national organizations which had existed previous to the war, such as the *zemstva* and the charitable, professional and learned societies, and more especially those new ones which had arisen during it. Of these the most important were the "General *Zemstvo* Alliance" and the "General Municipal Alliance."

The first of these societies was formed at the congress of delegates from the *zemstva* at Moscow, August 12, 1914. Prince G. E. L'vov, who had stood at the head of the *zemstvo* relief work during the Russian-Japanese war, and had then shown his talents as an organizer, was placed in charge. From the very first the alliance declared that the local peasant industry (weaving, shoemaking, etc.) should be organized and mobilized for the needs of the army, that the *zemstva* should take over and administer the requisitioning and preparation of food products and the like, and so forth. The ministry of the interior, however, put hindrances in the way of the development of the activity of the alliance, while the military authorities did not see fit to accept the offer. For this Russia later paid a shocking price in blood and money. The alliance was forced to confine itself to the organization of the care of the wounded, which the war department was not able to handle at all. At the end

of ten months (June 18, 1915), Prince L'vov was able to report that the alliance was maintaining (primarily on the basis of government subsidies) one hundred and seventy-five thousand cots for wounded soldiers, fifty-five special sanitary trains, and field organizations in all parts of the front.

Not long after the appearance of the *zemstvo* alliance came the formation of the municipal alliance. This was founded at the meeting of "town heads" (mayors) in Moscow, August 23, 1914. At this gathering it was pointed out that there was urgent need of intermunicipal action in order to regulate the distribution and transportation of food products. Here also the government put the same hindrances in the way of the extension of the field of the new organization's activities, and the municipal, like the *zemstvo*, was forced to turn its activities exclusively to the care of the wounded. Up to the end of the year 1915 it maintained seventy-six thousand cots and thirteen special trains in operation.

The difficulties which were met with in solving the problem of the large cities of the empire gave a new impulse to the activities of the two alliances. The minister of commerce and industry, Timashyóv, was dismissed (March 2, 1915), and his place was taken by Prince V. N. Shachovskói. The central provision committee, which was under the control of this ministry, was given special powers (April 14, 1915). Popular initiative, however, did not rest here. At the meeting of the Municipal Alliance in Moscow (April 19, 1915), the delegates appointed a commission to work out a plan to regulate the provision supply for the municipalities, while at the congress of the delegates of the produce exchanges and the agricultural unions, the ex-minister of commerce and industry Timiryázev and Prince Shachovskói laid strong emphasis upon the need of good relations between government and society so as to continue their co-ordinated work.

The continued misfortunes which overtook the Russian army in the field spurred the development of this movement. The deputies of the Duma began to insist that the legislative chambers be called together before the date mentioned in the ukaz announcing its adjournment (November 20, 1915). The congress of the representatives of commerce and industry passed resolutions (June 7, 1915) calling for the immediate mobilization of all the manufacturing resources of the country for the needs of the army. This impulse later developed into the gigantic industrial organization known as the "Industrial Committee for the Furnishing of Military Supplies for the

Army," through which are fulfilled all contracts made by the government in Russia. The effort of the government to put the affair on a primarily official basis was pronounced to be insufficient by public opinion; it was demanded that the *zemstvo* and the municipal alliances should also take part in the work. Lastly, they went on record that the Duma should be convoked without delay. At about the same time a number of different congresses were held, all of which insisted that the government must be responsible to the people.

The leaders of the different groups in the Duma met in the cabinet of the president of that body, and passed a resolution that the president, Rodzyánko, should see the premier about summoning the Duma as speedily as possible. Goremýkin agreed in principle, and, after a certain amount of delay, the ukaz summoning the legislative chambers was issued (July 22, 1915); the opening date of the session was fixed ten days later on.

In the meantime a very extensive reconstruction had taken place within the ranks of the ministry. The minister of public instruction, L. A. Kásso, who had kept the Russian educational world in a state of continued irritation by a series of indirect and petty repressive measures, had died, and his place was taken by Count P. N. Ignátyev (January 9, 1915). The latter has so far made a very creditable record in his office. By the use of common-sense and good will he has succeeded in ameliorating the relations between the ministry and the schools to a notable degree. Immediately previous to the convocation of the Duma, the personnel of the ministerial bench underwent a serious alteration. June 18, 1915, the minister of the interior, Maklakóv, who had drawn more ill-will upon himself than any of his colleagues, was suddenly dismissed. Prince Shcherbátov was appointed as his successor. June 25 followed the resignation of General Suchomlínov, the minister of war, now under trial on the charge of high treason. His place was taken by the very able and popular General A. A. Polivánov. July 17 V. K. Sábler, the procurator of the Holy Synod, left his post, which was assumed by A. D. Samárin, the leader of the Moscow nobility. Lastly, July 31, the minister of justice, I. G. Shcheglovítov, was replaced by Senator A. A. Chvostóv.

In so far as these dismissals were the means of ejecting undesirable individuals, they unquestionably tended to satisfy public opinion, but as far as marking a change in the internal policy of the government, they had not the slightest significance. With the exception of General Polivánov, who, all agreed, was

the right man for the right place, the new men in the ministry were all from the conservative *zemstvo* circles. While themselves honest and upright, they did not possess the confidence of the country, because not men alone were needed, but the policies for which they stood.

Goremýkin, however, did not approve of the idea of a reformed ministry such as was proposed by the Duma. While granting that the government and the Duma must needs work together, he declared that only such bills should be brought before the legislative chambers as were directly concerned with the needs of the war. All measures which were aimed at "the bettering of the conditions of Russian life in times of peace" were to be shelved for the time being. One exception was made (belated at that!) for the question of Polish autonomy.

The deputies who succeeded the premier on the speaker's tribune of the Duma did not agree with this attitude, but pointed out that the government could only gain the full union and confidence of the people by satisfying some of the more pressing popular demands. A significant example of the state of mind within the Duma itself was afforded by the elections of new members to the committee on army and navy affairs. The old commission resigned, and in its place new elements came in from the left side of the chamber. The able and energetic constitutional democrat, A. I. Shingaryóv, was made its chairman. The attempt of the conservative elements to formulate a program based solely upon the conflict with German oppression and the rise in prices did not meet with the approval of the majority of the Duma.

In general there now began to appear strong symptoms of discontent with the results of the session of the Duma. As ever, Moscow proved the true barometer of Russian politics. A number of conferences (private in their character) preceded the meeting of the Moscow municipal Duma of August 27, 1915. Four resolutions were adopted on this occasion, of which the substance is as follows:

1. Moscow has full confidence in our valiant army and in the Grand Duke, and will uphold them and back them up to the last man.
2. The whole population must set themselves to work for the needs of the army.
3. A close and vital union between the government and the people is necessary. Moscow is certain that the Duma is able and willing to do its share in the matter.
4. A government is necessary which is strong through the

confidence of the people, and must be headed by a person whom the people can trust.

The majority of the members in the Duma were already approaching the positions which the Moscow resolutions had marked out. At the meeting of party leaders (August 19, 1915), a plan had been brought forward by the constitutional democrats of laying out a general scheme of intended legislation for the further work of the Duma. This project, in a somewhat altered form, forms the substance of the declaration of the progressive *bloc*. After a very heated discussion, it came out that the center and moderates of both wings were agreed to adopt some such plan. Neither the extreme radicals nor the extreme conservatives would give their approval to the project. In the course of a number of conferences the party leaders worked out the program of the progressive *bloc*. This was published September 6, 1915, in the Moscow; September 7 in the Petrograd papers. As this document marks a turning point in the evolution of the subject which we are treating, it is incumbent upon us to devote some attention to it.

In substance its demands are as follows:

A ministry should be formed which has the confidence of the country.

The policy of the government should be based upon and directed by its trust in the country. In particular, the administration should be conducted according to the laws of the country (and not according to ministerial circulars). The activities of the war department should be restricted to its own province. The personnel of the local administrative forces should be subjected to a thorough renovation.

In regard to certain points in the internal administration of the Empire, a tolerant, intelligent and consistent policy should be adopted by the government. All political and religious trials not directly connected with the war should be stopped. All exiles who have suffered as a result of such prosecutions should be allowed to return at once. All legal measures tending to restrain freedom of belief contrary to the ukaz of April 17, 1905, should be reversed.

Touching legislation on nationalistic and class questions, the press is to be restored. The Finns are to have mild treatment, and the staff of Russian administrative officials must be altered. The persecution of Finnish officials is to cease. The Little-Russians should have their press restored to them. The inhabitants of Galicia who are detained under arrest shall have their cases examined at once. The trade unions shall be allowed

to function once more. The persecution of the labor leaders and of their press shall be stopped.

In legislative matters there shall be complete agreement between the government and the Duma. All laws connected with the war are to be put through without delay. Certain other laws whose primary object is to further the organization of the country for victory should be worked out and put through the legislative chambers as soon as possible. Such are the income tax; a law concerning reforms in the structure of the *zémstva*, and the foundation of the same in the Caucasus and in Siberia; a revision of the law on cooperative societies; a regulation of the rest-hours for workmen; a raise in salary for the postal employees; absolute prohibition of vodka; a reform of certain points in judicial procedure.

This declaration was signed by the leaders of all Duma-groups from the nationalists to the constitutional democrats inclusive.

The appearance of the *bloc* on the scene created a sensation. The conservative press fulminated and raged: the extremists on the left cursed the moderate radicals and branded them as renegades for their alliance with the center, while much of the radical press criticized the program of the *bloc* from one point of view or other. In general, however, public opinion assumed an expectant attitude, and waited to see what might befall.

The cabinet hesitated for some time as to the position which it should assume. Goremýkin endeavored to get the conservative forces to form a *bloc* to support the government, but the leaders of the nationalists and the "octobrists" informed him that they were bound with the agreements which had previously been made. The leaders of the *bloc* had a conference with the comptroller of the Empire, P. A. Charitónov, a man universally respected for his ability and character. The latter laid the matter before the ministers. The opinions in the cabinet were divided. Most of the ministers spoke in favor of the *bloc*, but Goremýkin and the minority were against any concession.

The premier left for headquarters (September 10, 1915) to consult with the emperor, and returned two days later with the ukaz announcing the adjournment of the Duma on the sixteenth of September. Excitement ran tremendously high, but the Duma and the population preserved their sang-froid. The official and semi-official press endeavored to interpret this as a sign of the powerlessness of the *bloc*. The *Kolokól* (September 18, 1915) remarked: "The Duma has adjourned, but the popular sea is calm, and its waves as of old break indifferently on the shore."

Popular initiative now left the precincts of the legislative chambers and transferred its activities to the meetings of the *zemstvo* and municipal alliances in Moscow (September 20, 1915). On this occasion the policy of the government in dissolving the Duma was strongly condemned, and its lack of faith in the people was bitterly deplored. Both congresses chose a deputation to express their feelings in the matter to the Emperor.

The assumption of the chief command of the Russian armies by the Emperor (September 4, 1915) gave the signal for a reactionary movement. This found immediate expression in the reconstruction of the ministerial bench which followed. The procurator of the Holy Synod, A. D. Samárin, resigned his post (October 7, 1915). Simultaneously with him, Prince Shcherbátov, the minister of the interior, was dismissed. The latter's place was taken by the leader of the conservatives in the Duma, A. N. Chvostóv. The departure of the second minister was due, according to the *Nóvoye Vrémya*, "from reliable sources," to his disagreement with the premier on points of internal policy. In the last days of his holding office, he was forced to deny an audience to a deputation from the *zemstvo* and municipal alliances which desired to consult with him on questions which "lay outside his political competency." Chvostóv probably owed his nomination (very unexpected to everybody) to his speech in the Duma on German oppression (November 7, 1914). Lastly one of the more moderate members of the cabinet, Krivoshéin, the minister of agriculture, was dismissed, and his place was taken by A. N. Naúmov, a candidate from the most conservative circles of the nobility.

That the population was discontented with the turn affairs had taken was evidenced by the elections to the Imperial Council, where the representatives of the *bloc* gained twelve new members. Among them were such progressive leaders as Prince E. N. Trubetskóï, P. P. Ryabushínskii, and A. I. Gutchkóv. The members appointed later were all strictly conservative.

To counteract this defeat, black band circles began a vigorous campaign against the progressive *bloc* under the leadership of the ex-minister of justice, Shcheglovítov. They declared that the members of the *bloc* were conspiring to overturn the government under the pretext of passing the most necessary legislative measures; likewise that they disregarded the words of the Emperor, "all for the war." Presumably in connection with this, the meetings of the municipal and *zemstvo* alliances, which were to have been called in Moscow in December, were

prohibited by the governor. The summons of the Duma was deferred by the ukaz of December 7, 1915, until the work of the budget commission should be completed.

The effect of the retreat of the Russian forces from Poland upon the public had been tremendous and shattering. The swift fall of the fortresses of Novo-Geórgievsk, Warsaw, Kóvno, Gródno, Brest-Litóvsk and Vilna, one after the other, had strained the nerves of the population to the highest point of tension. The inhabitants of Petrograd in particular disgraced themselves by a display of undue and exaggerated nervousness, but the same holds true to a certain extent of the rest of the country. The retreat was brought about solely by the shortage of ammunition, and stopped when the factories were in a position to supply the same. None the less, stories of treachery were flying about, and the words *pódkup* and *predátel'stvo* (bribery; treachery) were on every one's lips.

The halting of the German advance at the end of September, and the successful attack of the French and British on the German lines in Champagne calmed things somewhat, but in place of excitement and alarm came the inevitable reaction. A period of supineness set in. This feeling was strengthened by the reactionary policy which the government followed, by the economic difficulties in the way of obtaining food and fuel, and above all by the vast wave of refugees (*byézhentsy*), which flooded all the eastern governments. Four millions of unfortunates, in most cases wholly without personal effects, and practically destitute of means, were driven from their homes and forced to seek refuge in the more distant parts of the empire. The relatively speedy and successful distribution of this human avalanche was primarily due to the efficient work of the two alliances and of other private organizations.

The quartering of the refugees upon the villages caused a serious disturbance in the economic life of the country. Prices on food and lodging rose at once: the refugees themselves, being mostly women and children, and moreover receiving pecuniary support from the government, were by no means inclined towards field labor. The widespread dissatisfaction thus evoked among the peasantry forced the government to devote to it its most serious attention.

In the meantime the financial commission of the Duma had got the budget ready. The approach of the time for the convoking of the Duma was heralded by the resignation of Goremýkin. He was succeeded by B. V. Stürmer, a member of the Imperial Council, who had served as a governor in various parts

of the empire. He was noted as having been an enemy of the *zemstvó*, but, so far as any one could see, had exhibited no other capacities which could fit him for standing at the helm of the government at such a critical time. That he was a safe conservative goes without saying. A hint of his political alignment was given by the fact that he did not make a formal visit after his nomination to Count Ignatyev, the minister of public instruction, who was the one member of the cabinet who was on good terms with the progressive *bloc*. People were of course glad to get rid of Goremýkin, but to get Stürmer in his place was, as one wag remarked, to get the king of clubs instead of the king of spades. Shortly afterwards A. N. Chvostóv (the minister of the interior), who had started on his career with a great amount of talking to the newspapers, but had practically done nothing, was also dropped. Much more serious was the resignation of the minister of war, General Polivánov. Officially the matter was connected with disorders which occurred at the Putílov Iron Works, but there is no doubt that court intrigues played the largest part here. It was and is bitterly deplored by the country at large.

The Duma was at length summoned at the end of February, 1916. It was soon evident that the *bloc* was working well together. The attitude of the government and the *bloc* towards each other was one of armed neutrality, which was not specifically altered by the unexpected visit of the Emperor to the Duma. What the true significance of this very astonishing event was is impossible to say, and those who are best informed doubt if the Emperor was quite sure himself.

The *bloc* succeeded in getting the income tax law through the Duma and the Council; the cooperative bill passed the Duma before the Easter recess. The attacks on the *bloc* from the left and the right have not ceased, nor have they lost in vigor. The other general points for which the *bloc* is striving have not been attained, nor can they be, while a ministry of the present type is in power.

What, then, are our general conclusions to be with regard to the situation, past and present?

As regards the parliamentary side, we must note that for the first time in the short course of Russia's parliamentary history, a working coalition majority has been formed, which has proved its cohesiveness and ability under very adverse circumstances.

As regards national organizations, they have shown their vigor and capability in dealing with a series of very difficult

problems, in spite of an unsympathetic attitude—at times even direct hindrance—on the part of the government.

As regards the administration, the war has shown up its weakness and its disorganization, while more clearly than all else it has evinced its ability to adapt itself to new and unforeseen conditions.

As regards Russian society proper, and more particularly the thinking class, it has not, in my estimation, displayed itself in a very good light. While energy and enthusiasm have not been wanting, it has shown itself lacking in the persistency and will-power which carry a thing through to the bitter end. The want of intelligent general organization has made itself felt in every department of public activity. Unpreparedness played a large part, and government stupidity and obstruction have done their share, but Russian society must come in none the less for its share of the blame. On it alone must be placed the responsibility for the panic-stricken state which enveloped the Caucasus during the Turkish advance upon Sarakamýsh; which prevailed in Petrograd and Moscow during the German drive on Poland. This holds true more for the larger towns: the peasantry, especially of those districts which lie near the seat of military activities, have shown a much better and more determined spirit.

Thus the war has proved a great teacher. Along with the millions of lives which have been lost, and the tens of thousands of towns and cities burnt and destroyed, the people have been compelled to organize and to take command of the situation. After the war, without doubt, there will be great changes, whatever the outcome may be. For those true friends of Russia, who realize her faults, but love her for her good qualities, it is a source of consolation and encouragement to feel that the united forces of her people, brought to the light amid the thunder of the cannon and baptized in the tears of her suffering millions, have set firm foot on the road of progress, even though the goal be still distant. They alone, if it be possible for any one, shall bring it about that the developments after the war can expand along the lines of constitutional growth, and not take the form of a social deluge.